

# “God’s Plan Unfolding”

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-18; 3:1-6, 14-24

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## Introduction

- Recognition of God’s plan that supersedes all human plans
  - Daniel 4:34-35-- *“I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”*
- Two Competing Views of World History
  - Covenant View: Salvation of mankind
  - Dispensational View: Manifestation of the glory of God
- Spectrum of belief with shades in between.
- What distinguishes a dispensationalist?
  - 1) Church distinct from Israel
  - 2) Consistent use of the literal, historical interpretation of Scripture
  - 3) Purpose: Display of God’s glory.

## God’s Plan Unfolding

### A. *How many distinct dispensations in God’s plan?*

1. Thinking through the Scriptures together to determine the number.
2. Dispensations are not periods of time, but ways of governing.

### B. TWO DISCLAIMERS

1. The various dispensations do not represent different ways of salvation. It has always been by faith in God. The object of faith is God; the content of faith differs as more revelation is given.
2. The various dispensations are not an experiment by God to find the best way of governing, but to test man and to debunk all of man’s excuses.

### C. **First Dispensation: INNOCENCE or FREEDOM.**

1. **Description:** Adam was created with “untested creature holiness” which made him positively weighted towards God.
2. **Responsibilities:**
  - a. **Given dominion or stewardship over all of God’s creation**
    - Genesis 1:26-28-- *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”*
  - b. **Specific responsibility was to tend and keep the garden**
    - Genesis 2:15-17 -- *“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

- 1) God planted it
    - Genesis 2:8-9-- *"Out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*
  - 2) God watered it
    - Genesis 2:6-- *"a mist went up from the earth and watered the face of the ground.*
    - Genesis 2:10 -- *"a river went out of Eden to water the garden."*
  - 3) Adam was to prune the trees, pick the fruit, and enjoy God's creation.
3. **The Test:** *"Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."*
  4. **Does Adam pass the test?**
    - Genesis 3:1-6 -- *"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die." Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of is your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."*
  5. **The Judgment that follows**
    - Genesis 3:14-19-- *"So the LORD God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.' To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it": 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herbs of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.'"*
    - Romans 5:12-- *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned".*
    - Romans 8:19 -- *"creation was subjected to futility"*
    - Romans 8:22 -- *"we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."*
  6. **Expressions of God's Grace**
    - a. **Promise of a Redeemer who would crush the head of the serpent.**
      - Genesis 3:15-- *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*
    - b. **Provision of a covering for their sin in the present.**
      - Genesis 3:21-- *"Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them."*
    - c. **Protection from eating of the tree of life and thus live forever in their sinful condition.**
      - Genesis 3:22-24-- *"Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' — therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So, he drove out the man; and placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life."*